

WELCOME

Welcome to St. Peter's United Church of Christ. If you have no church home, we hope you will consider St. Peter's UCC as that place. Whether guest or member, please make your presence known by signing the Friendship Register in the pews and greet those near you.

Our prayer chapel is open following this service and daily from 9-4 for personal meditation and communion. It is located off the second floor elevator. Sunday school for children ages 4 to Grade 6 begins after the Children's moment. A class for youth grades 7-12 begins at 10:00 underneath the sanctuary. Adult Sunday school is 9 AM on Sundays. Child care is offered during the 10 AM service.

This week at St. Peter's:

Sunday	9:00	Adult Bible study (lectionary-based)
	10:00	Worship & Sunday school
	11:15	Constitution roundtable – dining room
	11:15	Confirmation Class in youth room Set up for Men of the Church Banquet
Monday	9:00	Women's Breakfast at Cowan's
	3:00-8:00	Pizza Hut night
	6:00	AA
	6:30	Quilting
Tuesday	7:00	Bible Discovery
	10:30	Staff Meeting
	1:30	Stewardship Board Meeting
Wednesday	6:30	Men of the Church Banquet - auditorium
	9:00	Quilting
	12:00	"Great Decisions" study – atrium meeting room
	6:00	AA
	6:00	Chapel Bells
Thursday	6:45	Vesper Bells
	7:30	Chancel Choir
	10:00	Women's Fellowship
	6:00	AA
Saturday	7:00	Mental Illness Support Group
	9:00	Scout Committee meeting – atrium meeting room
	10:45	HS Youth depart for Conference Youth Event with Pastor Leah
Sunday	5:00	Worship
	9:00	Adult Bible study (lectionary-based) - atrium meeting room
	10:00	Worship (Family Sunday*)
	11:00	Mardi Gras Celebration - auditorium

Don't forget about the last listening session for the Constitution – Your input is welcomed as we prepare to vote on our revised constitution at the Spring annual meeting. The last listening session will be held Feb. 7 at 11:15 AM in the dining room.

Please note: there will be no coffee hour next Sunday due to Mardi Gras.

*A message for all members and friends: Next Sunday will be **Family Sunday** which means children will stay in church with their families and Sunday school will not be offered. Activity kits will be available for children at the back of the sanctuary. Please return the kits after the service.

Why do we have “Family Sundays” at St. Peter’s? The Board of Christian Education and the pastors believe it important to expose children to worship so that they can grow to better understand and accept this important activity of the church. In some churches, there are children who go through confirmation and join the church never having experienced worship because they were always in Sunday school when they came to church. As an adult, can you imagine making such an important decision as joining a church when you’d never experienced worship with the people to whom you were committing to join? As adults we’d never think to do such a thing.

We realize that it is a bigger commitment we are asking parents to make—to guide your children through a worship service, but years down the road (past all the possible times of outbursts, playing in the pew, and poking of siblings) we pray and believe that you will see your hard work and the work of the Spirit growing a heart for worship in your child.

Perhaps you are a worshipper without children wondering how you can help these youngest of our church members and their parents. We believe you can best help by making Family Worship Sunday a place where children and adults want to be. Greet and offer extravagant welcome to children. Ask them questions as you would other adults. Make them look forward to seeing adults outside their family at church. Beyond warm welcome to parents, try not to look when a child makes noise. Even if your gaze is just one of memory for years past of your own, it can and may be interpreted otherwise.

Let’s all do our best to realize the promises we make at our church family baptisms. By the power of the Holy Spirit we will be stronger for it!

Great Decisions: Led by Dr. Bill Schwab every Wednesday from 12-12:45 in the Atrium Room. Come for a different kind of midweek study as we look at some global concerns from a faith perspective. This week is a special look at Cuba. A DVD educational clip will share information and we'll open the floor for a round-table, thought-provoking discussion. It's much better than talk radio!

MARDI GRAS IS NEXT SUNDAY! EVERYONE is invited to participate in the annual Mardi Gras celebration after the 10 o'clock church service next Sunday, Feb.14. There will be games and prizes, a food stand sponsored by the youth for everyone to have lunch, a cake/bake walk, and a themed basket silent auction. There is something for all ages, so come and enjoy. There is a sign-up sheet in the atrium if you are interested in donating a themed basket or individual items for a basket and cakes or other desserts for the bake walk. Items may be brought to the church office. Thank you, The Board of Christian Education

The **Women’s Fellowship** will hold their monthly meeting Thurs. Feb. 11., 10 AM, with the program by Holly Kommina at 11 AM, followed by a soup and corn bread lunch at noon. All ladies of the church are invited to join us for a morning of fellowship and fun.

Trivia Night February 20th here at St. Peter’s – Doors open at 6:00, Event begins at 7:00. Plan now to attend this event of great fun and purpose. Proceeds will go to help fund operations at our conference’s Camp Mo-Val as ways are sought to meet needs in the wake of reduced church giving through Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) offerings. Tickets for this event are \$15/person, or a table of eight for \$96 (\$12 per person if you buy a whole table!) If you are interested in attending, see Pastor Leah. This event is open to other churches and the community, so reserve your seats now!

Notice: There will be a special congregational meeting after the Sunday service on Feb. 21. This is for the sole purpose of voting on a proposed new copier for the church, per constitutional requirement.

Pancake Breakfast Sunday, Feb. 28, to Raise Funds for Haiti Relief Efforts The third through sixth grade classes would like to invite you to join them for a good meal and a great cause on the last Sunday of the month. Come eat their wonderful pancakes from 8:45-10 AM! \$5 per person gets you all-you-can-eat. If you can loan a griddle for this breakfast, please write “griddle” on the friendship register and bring the griddle to the dining room kitchen sometime in the week prior. Thanks!!

Weds.@St.Pete’s – Preparation for Lent Lent will be here before you know it. As in our debut last year, we will mark the season with opportunities for sharing, study, fellowship, and uplifting reflection. Lent begins with our Ash Wednesday Service on Feb. 17 at 7 PM. The following Wednesday will be a special video streaming missions event from the UCC. Three small group opportunities for adults and two for children will meet for the first four consecutive Wednesdays: March 3, 10, 17 & 24. Babysitting will also be available.

Please be thinking of which type of small group in which you would like to participate. The Journeymen are preparing for their gathering around Mitch Albom’s *Have a Little Faith*.

Debbie Douglas will be leading Journey to the Center of the Faith. The goal of the four sessions will be to prepare for Easter by living closely with Jesus’ journey of faith and how who he was, what he taught, and who he is for us now informs our living, the good news we proclaim as Christians, the suffering that comes with being faithful, and the claiming of resurrection. It is Christ-Centered, Kingdom-Visioned, Soul-Strengthened, and Deliriously Hopeful.

Rhonda Stocklausner is leading a class on parenting issues. Discussions will be according to the group's interests. Possible topics include: parenting styles, parenting birth to kindergarten and elementary children; parenting adolescents and teens; the single parent, divorce issues, etc. Lots of handouts will be given. To help the facilitators prepare, please indicate your interest on the Friendship register or notify Pastor Paul or the church office. People from the community are welcome to attend as well. Please indicate your interest or contact Pastor Paul.

If you would like to honor a loved one or anniversary by donating **altar flowers or worship bulletins** you may sign up on the schedule posted in the Market Street hall or contact church office. Thank you for your generous contribution to our services.

Staying Connected to the Wider Church Last year, the Missouri Mid-South Conference discontinued our long-running newspaper The Courier. In its place, we now publish a weekly email newsletter called The eCourier. We invite you to join our mailing list by emailing a request to mms@mmsucc.org. If you are unable to receive email, then you can still stay in touch—each church office and pastor receives our weekly newsletter which they may distribute to you. Just let your pastors know that you’d like to receive it and we’ll start setting our some hard copies. If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Evans in the MMS office at (314) 918-2605.

Heart to Heart Fair from 10 AM-2 PM Sat., Feb. 13, at the hospital. **For more information on this event and on other happenings around the area, remember to check the Market Street bulletin board every week.**

St. Peter's Messenger is "Going Green"! We will "Think Green" in the coming spring with the April issue being the first comprehensive effort. You can now receive notice and view the newsletter each month on the web. If you desire or need the newsletter mailed to you as it currently is, we will be happy to continue to do so, **but you must let us know**. Please return the form below directing us to continue mailing your copy. If we do not hear from you, then we will assume you are presently reading it online, or not reading *The Messenger* at all. Hard copies of the newsletter will be available for pickup during services. All shut-ins and nursing home residents will continue to have their newsletter mailed. Please complete the form below and return it to the office or drop it in the offering plate.

Name _____

_____ **Please continue to mail the newsletter to me.**

_____ **I will plan to pick up a hard copy when I am at church.**

_____ **Please notify me by email when the newsletter and weekly announcements are posted on the web plus other "breaking news."**

_____ **My email address is** _____

Please repeat email for legibility purposes. _____

True Conversion

[Excerpt from Acts 9:26-31](#)

"When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple."

Reflection by Abigail Hastings

I was ending my "live chat" online with tech support, when Gabriel (was she an angel?) concluded with the question: "Do you have any other doubt I can help you with today?"

I decided not to burden "Gabriel" with my doubts that day, not the least of which is one of fundamental importance to the faith: do I believe in conversion? Do I believe a person really can change?

When Barnabas brought his friend Saul to the believers in Jerusalem, they were right to be wary of him. Saul was infamous for persecuting followers of the Way -- the new order Jesus taught -- as if he was in a dress rehearsal for the Spanish Inquisition. A Roman who lived in the Greek city of Tarsus, Saul was raised a devout Jew; but he took his religious conviction to extremes, well beyond the moderate instruction of Gamaliel, his great teacher.

Barnabas recounted the dramatic story of Saul's conversion, but it likely took more than that for the other followers to exhale and enjoy Saul's company. Evidence of true conversion came quickly enough though -- Saul proved a convincing evangelist, ideally

suited by background and inclination to bridge the Jewish-Gentile, Hebrew-Greek divides. God truly moves in a mysterious, and sometimes counter-intuitive (thus always surprising) way!

Prayer

O God, create in me a clean heart, that I might be open to the possibility of changed lives through you, even as you are working within me to better reflect your light in the world.
Amen.